

**REMARKS**

Claims 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10-14, 16 and 17 are all the claims pending in the application.

Claims 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10-14, 16 and 17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as obvious over Tsuji et al. (WO 02081561).

The above WO document corresponds to US 2004/0106732 which will be referred to since it is in English.

Applicants submit that Tsuji et al do not disclose or render obvious the subject matter of the present claims and, accordingly, request withdrawal of this rejection.

The present invention as set forth in claim 1 as amended above is directed to a molded article comprising an acrylic block copolymer (A) which comprises a methacrylic polymer block (a) and an acrylic polymer block (b), wherein at least one of polymer blocks among the methacrylic polymer block (a) and the acrylic polymer block (b) has a functional group (X), and a compound (B) containing at least 1.1 or more of functional groups (Y) in one molecule. The number average molecular weight of the acrylic block copolymer (A) measured by gel permeation chromatography is 30,000 to 200,000. The functional group (X) is at least one kind of functional groups selected from an acid anhydride group, a carboxyl group, and a hydroxyl group. The compound (B) is a polymer having a weight average molecular weight of 50,000 or less.

The functional group (Y) is at least one kind of functional groups selected from an epoxy group, a carboxyl group, and an acid anhydride group. The functional group (Y) is a functional group having reactivity with the functional group (X). The functional group (X) and the functional group (Y) are reacted at molding and the acrylic block copolymer (A) is crosslinked.

Thus, applicants have amended claim 1 to delete an epoxy group as the functional group (X) and to delete a hydroxyl group, an amino group and an oxazoline group as the functional group (Y).

The Examiner asserts that that the brominated phenol formaldehyde resin crosslinking agent employed in paragraph [0219] of Tsuji et al is a compound that satisfies compound (B) of the present claims. However, this crosslinking agent of Tsuji et al is not for crosslinking an acrylic block copolymer (A), but for crosslinking the butyl rubber as the component (B) of Tsuji et al. Thus, Tsuji et al. does not disclose or teach the component (B) of the present invention.

An epoxy group as the functional group (X) and a hydroxyl group, an amino group and an oxazoline group as the functional group (Y) are deleted from the amended Claim 1. Tsuji et al do not disclose the combination of the functional group (X) with the functional group (Y) as amended in claim 1 of the present invention.

In contrast, in the present invention, since the acrylic block copolymer (A) and the compound (B) in the thermoplastic elastomer composition are in an unreacted state before molding, they are excellent in melting property in a mold. On the other hand, the acrylic block copolymer (A) is reacted with the compound (B) within a definite period of time until it is solidified by cooling, the acrylic block copolymer (A) is converted to having a high molecular weight or crosslinked, and heat resistance after the molding is improved. See the present specification at page 56, lines 16 to 24. The above-mentioned function and result are not described or suggested by Tsuji et al. Thus, the result obtained by the present invention is unexpected and surprising as compared with the invention according to Tsuji et al. Therefore, the present invention is not obvious over Tsuji et al.

In view of the above, applicants submit that Tsuji et al do not disclose or render obvious the subject matter of the present claims and, accordingly, request withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10-14, 16 and 17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kaneda, cited by applicants (JP 200260449) optionally in view of Shimada et al. (US 6,090,468).

Applicants submit that JP 2002-60449 does not disclose or render obvious the subject matter of the present claims and, accordingly, request withdrawal of this rejection.

As discussed above, applicants have amended claim 1 to delete an epoxy group as the functional group (X) and to delete a hydroxyl group, an amino group and an oxazoline group as the functional group (Y).

JP 2002-60449 does not disclose the combination of the functional group (X) with the functional group (Y) as amended in claim 1 of the present invention.

In contrast, in the present invention, since the acrylic block copolymer (A) and the compound (B) in the thermoplastic elastomer composition are in an unreacted state before molding, they are excellent in melting property in a mold. On the other hand, the acrylic block copolymer (A) is reacted with the compound (B) within a definite period of time until it is solidified by cooling, the acrylic block copolymer (A) is converted to having a high molecular weight or crosslinked, and heat resistance after the molding is improved. See the present specification at page 56, lines 16 to 24. The above-mentioned function and result are not described or suggested by JP 2002-60449. Thus, the result obtained by the present invention is unexpected and surprising as compared with the invention according to JP 2002-60449. Therefore, the present invention is not obvious over JP 2002-60449.

In view of the above, applicants submit that JP 2002-60449 does not disclose or render obvious the subject matter of the present claims and, accordingly, request withdrawal of this rejection.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

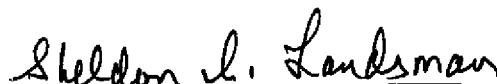
SUGHRUE MION, PLLC  
Telephone: (202) 293-7060  
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

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Sheldon I. Landsman  
Registration No. 25,430